

MAKE AND MODEL

# Tour de Force

CHAN HON GOH

Feature by Jason Sarai   Photos by Ellen Ho



Chan Hon Goh is the force behind the Goh Ballet Academy in Vancouver. Following an illustrious career as the first Chinese-heritage prima ballerina with the National Ballet of Canada, she accepted an invitation to direct the academy that trained her and that bears her family’s name.

Today, Chan Hon Goh is a model of success and style. Goh is an innovator in the arts community, an international dance adjudicator, mentor and business leader. She is a previous recipient of the RBC Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Award, Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, and the YWCA Women of Distinction Award. 2018 marks the tenth anniversary of the Goh Ballet’s signature production, *The Nutcracker*.

*What do you do for work?*

CHG: I am the director of Goh Ballet Academy and Youth Company in Vancouver and a former principal dancer of the National Ballet of Canada. I have the privilege of working with emerging artists and mentoring students daily which enriches me as I continue to grow and to learn from them too.

*How did you get into this line of business?*

CHG: It was always my dream to become a ballerina. Growing up in a family of artists, my parents were both principal dancers with the National Ballet of China, and my grandfather a painter. I felt that dance was where I could truly express myself and personify the music.

*What’s the most common misperception of your profession?*

CHG: As a ballerina, the misperception is that it’s easy, fun and effortless. Well, it only is fun, easy and effortless because we spend countless hours perfecting a single movement, practising to defy gravity and projecting graceful articulations to make what is at first impossible, possible. As a director of a dance organization, I feel the common misperception is that decisions are made in a subjective manner which discards that multitude of other elements that come into the equation without common knowledge, although it will always be “in my opinion.”

*What would you like your company to be recognized for?*

CHG: The qualities of artistic excellence, leaders in the dance educational industry, and affecting the future development of culture while contributing to community needs. Also shaping our artistic landscape. They are all driving forces propelling us to do our best.





*What are your future hopes for the Goh Ballet Academy?*

CHG: I hope to bring our distinction in dance training and productions to more cities and locations. As an organization, to never stop learning and growing so that we continue to contribute to the changing needs as reflected by changes and advancements in our society. Goh Ballet believes in creating easy access to quality dance programs. We would like to present professional dance productions to more communities where the performing arts will be a fulfilling part of life.

*Where does Vancouver stand globally in the world of arts? How can the art scene improve and grow in Vancouver?*

CHG: Vancouver is known for many things, but perhaps art is not currently on the top-five list at this time. We are doing our part to steadily produce programs, repertoire, productions, dancers, choreographers and teachers who will positively affect rapid growth, and it's becoming known. Vancouver is so much more than our mountains and oceans!

*What interests and hobbies do you have outside of work?*

CHG: I draw a lot of inspiration from nature, people and history. It does seem at times that things I do outside of work are also what continue to inspire me in my work. I think time to do nothing is a valuable way to recharge.

*Outside of work, what other activities and organizations are you a part of?*

CHG: I was a founding member of the City of Vancouver's Arts and Culture Policy Council and I regularly spend time on the juries of international dance competitions around the world. I believe in advocating for artists and for education. I also contribute time on the advisory board of Mulgrave School, which is an independent International Baccalaureate school.

**VEHICLE:** Rolls-Royce Dawn Drophead Coupé  
**ATTIRE:** A confident and intricate summer look is created through this artistic knee-length dress by Dolce & Gabbana, paired with Christian Louboutin heels.







**VEHICLE:** Rolls-Royce Phantom Extended Wheelbase  
**ATTIRE:** Sophistication through simplicity is evidenced by this ebony-and-ivory Roland Mouret gown. This elegant look is complete with matching accessories and Christian Louboutin pumps.

*How does clothing play a part in your business and profession?*

CHG: I believe clothing, or the clothes one chooses to wear, says a lot about the way that the person wants to be remembered.

*What does style mean to you?*

CHG: A very important statement...style is an extension of my character.

*How would you describe your style?*

CHG: Understated, polished, elegant and ever-changing depending on my mood or who I am with and what I am doing.

*What role do accessories play in your wardrobe?*

CHG: Not so much a fan of too many accessories. I feel it shouldn't be at all about the accessories or the clothes. Everything should emphasize the attention on the person and not the things. If someone compliments me on the nice pair of earrings, I really hope what they mean is, those earrings make you look radiant.

*Where do you look for inspiration on style?*

CHG: Everywhere. It is not purposeful but it tends to just happen.

*The "Spirit of Ecstasy" ornament on the Rolls-Royce signifies a guiding light for the fearless and pushing boundaries. How does that relate to your story?*

CHG: As an artist, there is always the ongoing need to chase my dreams and make them a reality. I still believe in making the impossible possible with the need to be fearless in my pursuit. Now, it's very much about passing my experiences to a new generation, in a way like a guiding light. Dance needs to and keeps pushing boundaries. There lies striving to push for greatness and chasing an unattainable perfection which keeps evolving.

*What goes into your decision when selecting a car for your career and lifestyle?*

CHG: I suppose the thought is, "Can I identify with what the brand stands for and is it dependable?" »



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